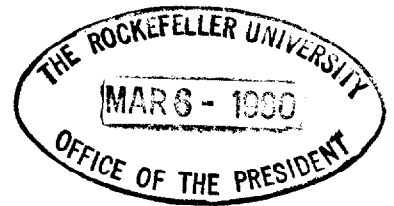




UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Bureau of Standards
Washington, D.C. 20234



February 29, 1980

Professor J. Lederberg
President
Rockefeller University
New York, New York 10021

Dear Professor Lederberg:

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chairman of the Interagency Steering Committee for the NIH/EPA Chemical Information System (CIS). The CIS, as you may know, is an integrated search system operating with a collection of data bases concerning chemical substances. A total of about 180,000 chemicals are presently listed in the CIS; existing data bases include properties such as mass spectra, toxicity, and X-ray diffraction patterns. Currently, the system, which operates upon a commercial computer on a fee-for-service basis, is used by over 300 account holders in 15 different countries.

Development of the CIS has been almost entirely underwritten by the U.S. Government, operating through a series of formal agreements between the interested agencies, which include the National Institutes of Health, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Bureau of Standards, the Food and Drug Administration, and others. Overall guidance to the CIS managers at NIH and EPA is provided by the Steering Committee, which meets quarterly.

The Steering Committee has proposed the formation of a Scientific Advisory Board to provide general policy advice on further development and improvement of the CIS. I should like to invite you to become a member of this Board. While the charge of the Board has not been defined in detail (and, indeed, we hope that the initial members will help in this definition), the following types of questions are typical of those which might come before the Board:

- Scientific quality of existing CIS data bases
- Need for new data bases
- Specific needs of the research community
- Software needs, including the substructure search system

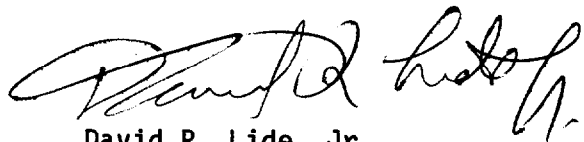
In brief, we wish to set up a group which can look at the CIS from the users' viewpoint and which will bring a broad perspective to the plans for the System.

The Board is envisaged as a group of approximately six members. A list of people to whom I am sending this letter is attached. Once a group is formed, it is expected that a preliminary meeting will be held in conjunction with a regular meeting of the Steering Committee, probably in late April. This will enable Advisory Board members to meet the Steering Committee and be briefed on the current status of the CIS. Thereafter, I would expect that much of the business of the Advisory Board could be conducted by telephone and mail, with perhaps a single annual meeting. Naturally, any travel expenses incurred by Board members will be defrayed.

Enclosed, you will find some descriptive material concerning the CIS, as well as the most recent (12/31/79) of the semi-annual CIS Status Reports. Please call me at 301-921-2467 if you have any questions.

I shall look forward to hearing from you and hope very much that you will be able to accept this invitation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David R. Lide, Jr.", written in dark ink.

David R. Lide, Jr.
Chairman
CIS Steering Committee

Enclosures